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SECURITY INFORMATION

5 August 1953

INDOCHINA

- I. No real improvement militarily or politically.
 - A. Large-scale Viet Minh offensive anticipated for fall.
 1. Enemy preparations evident in both Tonkin and Laos.
 - a. Improving roads and building up supply dumps in Tonkin.
 - b. Stockpiling of supplies and political activities in Laos.
 2. Chinese deliveries to Viet Minh this year almost double last year's.
 - a. New supply routes; new type arms.
 3. Critical area is Tonkin delta, but thrust into Laos would threaten Cambodia and alarm other countries.
 - B. Several high French officials believe Viet Minh capable overrunning delta.
 1. French lack adequate mobile reserves.
 2. Infiltrated enemy saturates delta.
 3. Viet Minh effectively sabotaging communications there.
 4. French strengthening of Laos would further weaken delta.
 - C. General Navarre hopes following measures will improve French position -- most still in planning stage.
 1. Local commando operations to harass enemy.

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2. Hitting Viet Minh first in September.
 3. Attacks on enemy's flanks and rear.
 4. Divisional rather than battalion operations.
 5. Abandonment of some static posts to release troops for action.
- D. Navarre's plans largely dependent on more troops from France.
1. Only half of requested 20,000 have been promised; won't arrive in time for fall campaign.
 2. Vietnamese Army progressing slowly; goal of 54 new battalions by November may be reached, but these won't contribute much this year.
- E. Over-all balance indicated by comparing French decrease in Tonkin strength by six battalions to reported enemy increase from six to seven divisions.
- F. Public pressure in France for solution mounting.
1. Korean truce is stimulus.
 2. Public demands confuse outright withdrawal of French forces and some solution which could guard against Communist control.
 3. But parliamentary support for negotiations with Viet Minh not yet serious.
 4. Some evidence of merely short term planning in Paris in hope that victories might clear way for deal with Peiping or Viet Minh.

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G. Vietnam government now has delegation in France.

1. Bao Dai heading delegation.
2. He says Vietnam may "grant concessions" to France in exchange for French aid to Vietnam Army.

H. Cambodia now agreeable to negotiations with France.

1. King's program to "mobilize peasants" goes forward, however.
 2. Tension still high and favorable outcome hinges on King's controlling popular anti-French feeling and French clarifying position re independence.
- I. No date set for beginning of negotiations.
1. Time probably past when dramatic announcement of independence to cause enthusiastic support of war.
 2. Best that can be hoped for is some agreement which would nullify Viet Minh appeal.

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